

Dear Committee Chair and Committee Members,

My name is Jennifer Allen. I live in West Hartford, am a mother of 2, a wife and work as a musician. I am testifying to the need to seriously consider taking stronger gun control measures in Connecticut. I stand with all the recommendations of CT Against Gun Violence including: a ban on military-style assault weapons, a ban on high capacity ammunition magazines, universal background checks, universal and annual registration renewal, and a limit handgun purchase to one a month.

On December 14th, 2012 my god-daughter, Ana Marquez-Greene, was gruesomely shot to death along with her classmates in Newtown, CT. Since that day my life has changed and I can no longer be silent. I will stand up against gun violence and for the VALUE of ALL humans.

Just a little background- I saw Ana right after she came into this world in the hospital. She was beautiful even on that first day of life! She grew up with my two children and became one of my children's best friends (her brother is their other best friend!). We spent MANY days and nights together doing things that kids do- playing, dancing, bowling, eating ice cream, going to see outdoor concerts, having sleepovers, telling bed time stories, playing slip and slide, going to Chuck E Cheese, and giving "group hugs". These were just some of the many times we spent together. My husband Kris and I were charged with being her god-parents and we were honored and grateful for that privilege. I share this so you have an image of real families and real love. Real lives were turned upside down on December 14, 2012. The type of damage these guns and ammunition do has a ripple effect. The pain goes deep and far.

Less guns will equal less gun related death. IT is stupid to believe otherwise. The types of guns and ammunition we now allow in civilians hands is outrageous. There is no NEED for them and these types of guns only leave behind great destruction! We have the chance NOW to make a change in things that matter. As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr said " Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter." Please don't be silenced by big money gun companies and the NRA. We as human beings need to stop being bullied by big money.

I am sorry it is taking CT so long to figure out what is the "right" thing to do is. Please do not drag your feet any longer. Stand up and make the right decision. We need to think of people's rights to LIVE not the convenience of someone who shoots as a hobby or uses a gun to protect their home or gun companies losing profits. PLEASE we need common sense - to uphold the idea that a PERSON is WORTH MORE THAN A GUN! I pray that you as a committee will be able to stand up and do exactly that. DO NOT cave to big money. I believe that our God above is a much higher authority that you and I will both have to answer to. I pray that our actions will reflect those of Jesus-who cared for others more than his own "rights".

Thank you,

Jen Allen

West Hartford, CT